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I. LAND AND PEOPLE

1. At the end of 1990, Jordan's population was estimated at 3,453,000 persons (1,676,000 of whom were female) distributed among the various governorates of the Kingdom in the manner shown in table 1 below. According to the statistics for 1989, 2,176,260 were living in urban areas and 934,740 in rural areas. The expression "urban areas" refers to settlements with a population of 5,000 or more.

2. Jordan, which covers an area of 90,000 km^2, has one of the world's highest population growth rates. According to the statistics, the natural population growth rate amounts to 3.8 per cent, with an annual rate of increase of 3.96 per cent. The proportion of males is 52.4 per cent. Young persons under 15 years of age account for 53 per cent, and persons over 65 years of age for 2.9 per cent, of the total population. The proportion of the urban population is 64.7 per cent due to the large expansion of the principal cities such as Amman, Irbid and Zarqa.

3. The population of Jordan is not evenly distributed throughout the country's territorial area. For example, more than half of the population lives in the capital, its suburbs and the Jordan Valley, and it is noteworthy that the population density is higher in the north of the country, where it amounts to 85 persons per km^2, and lower in the southern areas, with 15 persons per km^2 at Karak and 8 at Ma'an. In the desert areas of which the largest part of the country consists (about 77 per cent of the total area of the East Bank), the population density is one person per km^2.

4. Arabs constitute the majority of Jordan's population, accounting for 98 per cent of the total. The remainder are groups of non-Arab origin who arrived and settled in the country in the late 1870s. Most of these immigrants came from the area north of the Caucasus (Circassians, Shishan and Daghestanis), although some came from elsewhere (Armenians, Kurds, Turks etc.). All of them hold full Jordanian citizenship and have equal rights and duties.

5. In fact, the policy of the Jordanian Government is based on the principle that all citizens of Jordan have equal rights and duties, as members of a single family. The principle of solidarity, together with a firm belief in coexistence as a single entity, is the basic factor that completely precludes any intercommunal or interracial problems in the territory of Jordan.

6. In Jordan, minorities enjoy complete freedom to exercise their religious, educational, political and cultural rights.

7. The principal demographic indicators (vital statistics) for 1990 are as follows:

(a) The birth rate, which is defined as the number of births per 1,000 of the population during a single Gregorian year, amounted to about 40 in the middle of that year;

(b) The mortality rate, which is defined as the number of deaths per 1,000 of the population during a single Gregorian year, amounted to about 7 in the middle of that year;

(c) The nuptiality rate, which is defined as the number of marriages per 1,000 of the population during a single Gregorian year, amounted to 9.5;

(d) The divorce rate, which is defined as the number of cases of divorce per 1,000 of the population during a single Gregorian year, amounted to 1.5;

(e) In 1990, the total number of live births amounted to 116,520 males and 56,388 females and the number of still births amounted to 10,569 males and 6,262 females.

8. The estimated population by sex and age group in 1990 is shown in table 2 below.

9. Jordan is passing through a stage of its socio-economic development characterized by democratic and developmental transformation in all spheres with a view to the establishment of a new foundation for a firm socio-economic base that will further its progress and advancement and ensure a better life for its people in various fields, such as education, employment, health and the economy, in a manner consistent not only with its socio-political ideology and philosophy, its aspirations and its humanitarian values but also with positive participation in mankind's progress towards peace and security for all.

10. In view of the country's limited economic and capital resources and the lack of stability in the region, where successive wars have burdened Jordan with considerable material and moral responsibilities, the Government is diligently endeavouring to rectify the socio-economic imbalance and achieve social justice and a decent life for all in keeping with the inherent historic aspirations of Arab-Islamic culture while, at the same time, benefiting from the experiences of nations which have overcome backwardness and achieved progress and a large degree of prosperity.

The economic situation in 1990

11. From 1989 until the outbreak of the Gulf crisis in August 1990, Jordan was able to recover its fundamental stability and resume the pace of economic growth after the severe economic crisis to which its economy was subjected in the latter part of 1988 and early 1989.

12. The various economic indicators reflected a notable improvement during the first half of 1990 due to better performance in the industrial sectors, an increase in local income and a curtailment of public expenditure, which helped to reduce the budget deficit. The balance of payments also improved due to an increase in national exports and a rescheduling of foreign debts, and the Central Bank was able to restabilize the foreign exchange market and reduce the margin between the official and free exchange rates following the readoption, in February 1990, of a single exchange rate to cover all visible and invisible economic transactions.

13. However, the Jordanian economy was adversely affected by the Gulf crisis as a result of the decline in remittances from expatriate workers, many of whom returned to the country, as well as the reduced volume of Jordanian exports and the suspension of Arab aid. The tourist, transport, shipping and transit sectors, in particular, were severely affected.

14. Faced with this situation, the Jordanian Government endeavoured to take appropriate measures to preserve the achievements that the country had made before the outbreak of the Gulf crisis and to adapt to the new circumstances, thereby considerably alleviating the economic impact of the unfavourable situation in 1990.

15. The trends in these indicators, as compared with those for 1989, are summarized below:

(a) The gross domestic product at current factor cost rose by 0.6 per cent in 1990, as compared with a growth rate of 19.2 per cent in 1989. GDP at current market prices rose by 1.1 per cent, as compared with 15.4 per cent in 1989. GDP at constant factor cost declined by 6.0 per cent in 1990, as compared with a decline of 2.5 per cent during the previous year, and GDP at constant market prices declined by 5.6 per cent, as compared with a decline of 5.7 per cent in 1989;

(b) At the sectoral level, income generated by the commodity production sectors rose by 1.6 per cent at constant prices in 1990, as compared with a decline of 1.1 per cent in 1989. Growth in the agricultural sector amounted to 6.1 per cent, as compared with a decline of 13.1 per cent in 1989. The electricity/water and construction sectors grew by 8.1 per cent and 3.0 per cent respectively in 1990, as compared with a growth of 2.8 per cent and a decline of 4.5 per cent respectively in 1989. The services sector declined by 10.0 per cent, as compared with a decline of 3.2 per cent in 1989. The rates of decline at constant prices ranged from 38.5 per cent in the transport and communications sector to 2.1 per cent in the domestic services sector, while the banking services, non-profit-making institutions, financial and real estate services, and producers of government services sectors grew by 3.8 per cent, 3.0 per cent, 2.7 per cent and 0.9 per cent respectively;

(c) In 1990, the general level of prices rose at a slower rate than in the previous year. The cost-of-living index rose by 16.1 per cent, as compared with 25.8 per cent in 1989. This decline is attributable to the policies and monetary measures adopted by the Central Bank, which were designed primarily to curb the rate of growth in the local money supply and stabilize the exchange rate of the Jordanian dinar. It is also partly attributable to the Government's financial policies, which curbed the increase in the general budget deficit during that year;

(d) Public income, amounting to 938.7 million dinars in 1990, was 9.7 per cent higher than in the previous year. This growth resulted from the increase in domestic income and in the repayment of loan instalments due (32 per cent and 5.6 per cent respectively) and the 37.9 per cent decline in external aid. Public expenditure, amounting to 1,033.7 million dinars, constituted a moderate rise of 4.1 per cent in comparison with the level for the previous year and was 5.5 per cent lower than the general budgetary

estimates for that year. These developments led to a 30.7 per cent reduction in the financial deficit which, at 95 million dinars, was 49.3 per cent lower than the budgetary estimates;

(e) The outstanding balance of Jordan's external debts (after deduction of repayments from the total value of the loans contracted) amounted to 6,052.5 million dinars in 1990, as compared with 5,409.4 million dinars in the previous year, thereby indicating a growth rate of 11.9 per cent. The outstanding balance was therefore equivalent to 235.7 per cent of GDP in 1990, as compared with 212.9 per cent in 1989. The unpaid balance of the internal public debt amounted to 1,037.4 million dinars, i.e. an increase of 4.3 per cent over the level for the previous year. Consequently, the proportion of this balance in relation to GDP rose from 39.2 per cent in 1989 to 40.4 per cent in 1990. The interest and premiums paid on the internal public debt rose from 29.2 million dinars in 1989 to 32.1 million in 1990, i.e. the equivalent of 4.3 per cent of domestic income;

(f) The foreign trade sector (national exports + imports) continued to achieve excellent growth rates for the second successive year, rising from 30.9 per cent in 1989 to 32.5 per cent in 1990. The growth rate for national exports amounted to 14.6 per cent, as compared with 64.4 per cent in the previous year, while imports rose at a rate of 40.3 per cent as compared with 20.3 per cent in 1989. As a result, the foreign trade component of GNP rose from 69.4 per cent in 1989 to 91 per cent in 1990 (23.8 per cent increase in national exports and 67.2 per cent increase in imports). The per capita share of foreign trade also rose from 567.1 dinars in 1989 to 677.1 dinars in 1990.

The external public debt

16. The statistics concerning Jordan's external indebtedness in 1990 show that the outstanding balance of external debts (after deduction of repayments from the total loans contracted) amounted to 6,052.5 million dinars, as compared with 5,409.4 million dinars in 1989, i.e. an increase of 11.9 per cent. This is attributable to the increase in the value of the loans contracted and the decrease in repayments.

17. In 1990, the total drawings on external loans amounted to 373.7 million dinars.

18. Total repayments of external loans during the year fell by 10.3 per cent to 314.7 million dinars. This is attributable to the 41.1 per cent increase in interest payments (180.3 million dinars) and the 39.7 per cent decrease in capital repayment instalments (134.4 million dinars) as a result of the rescheduling of Jordan's external debts and the suspension of its repayments after the outbreak of the Gulf crisis.

19. With regard to the debt rescheduling operation, agreement was reached with the Paris Club and the London Club to reschedule an amount of $645.4 million, i.e. the equivalent of 428.4 million dinars of instalments due in 1990, although the interest due in that year was not rescheduled. In 1989, $604.4 million of instalments and interest due in that year were rescheduled, of which $494.4 million consisted in instalments, the remainder being interest.

20. The external debt ratio, measured as the proportion of external loan repayments in relation to total exports of goods and services, declined significantly in 1990, amounting to 14.7 per cent as compared with 20.2 per cent in the previous year, due to the 24 per cent increase in the value of exports of goods and services and the 10.3 per cent decline in total loan repayments.

21. The value of the external loans contracted in 1990 amounted to about 419.8 million dinars, i.e. the equivalent of $655.8 million, and the greater part of these loans (75.3 per cent of the total loans contracted) was used to support the public treasury. In comparison, the education sector was allocated 10.9 per cent of these loans and the industrial and mining sector 10.3 per cent.

Repercussions of the Gulf crisis on Jordan

22. In view of Jordan's geographical location and its close economic links with neighbouring Arab States, it was the country most severely affected, after Iraq and Kuwait, by the events of the Gulf crisis. The principal adverse effect arose from Jordan's commitment to Security Council resolution 661 (1990), which imposed an economic embargo on Iraq and Kuwait. That crisis occurred at a time when Jordan was successfully implementing an economic reform programme in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund.

23. Jordan's total losses were estimated by the United Nations, in collaboration and agreement with the competent Jordanian authorities, at about $1.3 billion in 1990 on the assumption that Jordan would continue to import its petroleum requirements from Iraq. In the event of Jordan's having to resort to other sources for the import of its petroleum requirements, its estimated losses would increase to about $1.5 billion, including a direct loss of about $1 billion due to the enforcement of the economic embargo on Iraq. These losses are extremely heavy for a small economy such as Jordan's, since they represent about 35 per cent of GDP for 1989, or about 50 per cent of Jordan's total foreign exchange earnings.

24. The repatriation of almost 300,000 Jordanian nationals from the Arabian Gulf States, and especially from Kuwait, from the beginning of the crisis to the end of 1990 placed further burdens on the Jordanian Government due to the need to provide them with basic economic and social services, quite apart from the impact of that influx of returnees on the Jordanian economy, which was already suffering from high rates of unemployment. The discontinuance of the remittances of those workers had an adverse effect on their families living in Jordan and the country itself was severely affected by the influx of large numbers of Asian and Egyptian workers who were employed in Iraq and Kuwait before the outbreak of the crisis.

25. More than 800,000 persons passed through Jordan during the period from August to November 1990, and it is estimated that the provision of relief for those persons, in the form of accommodation, food, transport and the requisite health services, cost Jordan about $48 million. The adverse effects of that influx included an increase in environmental pollution, particularly in view of the lack of appropriate infrastructure in the camps that were established for them.

26. In addition to the above, the slow-down in economic activity as a result of the crisis reduced the level of tax revenue, and the situation was further aggravated by the suspension of aid from the Arab States. This decline in the country's domestic and external resources led to a reduction in government spending which, in turn, had an adverse impact on employment due to the fact that the Government helps to provide many employment opportunities through its expenditure on investment and development projects.

27. In spite of the heavy estimated losses caused by the Gulf crisis, Jordan was able, by virtue of the aid and soft loans obtained through the Financial Coordination Committee on the Gulf Crisis and the diligent endeavours made by the responsible authorities, to mitigate the adverse effects of the crisis on its economy in 1990. A number of States, particularly Germany, Japan and members of the European Community, responded to the recommendations of the United Nations and other international institutions by providing financial aid to enable Jordan to overcome the effects of the crisis. The sums drawn on the aid and loans provided by those States in 1990 amounted to $352 million, of which $140 million was in the form of aid and $212 million in the form of soft loans. Jordan's suspension of payment of a large part of its debt instalments and interest due after the outbreak of the crisis (totalling $324 million in 1990) and its rescheduling of about $645 million in instalments due during that year also had a positive effect in preventing depletion of the Central Bank's foreign exchange reserves.

28. Other factors which helped to cushion some of the adverse effects of the crisis included the repatriation to Jordan of part of the funds deposited abroad which, in itself, reflected an increase in confidence in the national economy as a safe refuge for savings.

29. This review of the Jordanian economy's estimated losses as a result of the Gulf crisis, as well as the mitigating factors that enabled it to cushion some of the effects of that crisis during the year, clearly shows that radical measures are still needed to deal with the future adverse effects of the crisis on various activities in the Jordanian economy, since most of the above-mentioned mitigating factors were of a temporary nature whereas the adverse factors will have an ongoing impact which, in some cases, may even be aggravated in the long term. The principal factor is possibly the return to Jordan of large numbers of Jordanian workers from the Gulf States, particularly Kuwait, since it entails higher infrastructural expenditure and higher rates of unemployment in addition to the loss of income from their remittances. Most of the Gulf markets will also probably remain closed to Jordanian exports of goods and services and the aid formerly received from those States is likely to remain suspended. Furthermore, in the absence of any reduction in its external indebtedness, Jordan's debt-servicing obligations in coming years will constitute heavy burdens that will be increasingly difficult to shoulder in the light of the above-mentioned circumstances and factors.

30. With regard to the repatriation of large numbers of Jordanian expatriates, the estimates indicate that almost 300,000 Jordanian workers and their families returned from the Arabian Gulf States during the period following the outbreak of the crisis in 1990, and it is expected that many others, up to another 300,000, may yet return. In fact, the repatriation of

these large numbers of expatriates will have numerous future socio-economic repercussions which will place heavy additional burdens on the general budget in order to meet their basic needs in regard to education, health, water, sewage, electricity, transport and communications.

31. A further effect of the return of these expatriates is expected to take the form of a sharp decline in income from the remittances of Jordanians working abroad, which constitute a major source of the Kingdom's foreign exchange. This will increase the foreign exchange deficit and, consequently, the estimated financial deficit in Jordan's balance of payments.

32. The continued suspension of Arab aid is a fundamentally adverse factor resulting from the Gulf crisis, in view of the fact that such aid constitutes one of the principal sources of foreign exchange income for Jordan and its public treasury, since this aid covered 60.4 per cent of the deficit in the trade balance and provided 28.7 per cent of the State's general income in 1989. Consequently, the continued suspension of Arab aid will further aggravate the future adverse effects of the crisis on the Jordanian economy, which will find it extremely difficult to procure the foreign exchange needed to cover its current external expenditure on imports, for example, and to make the payments due in respect of its external debts.

33. These future adverse effects of the crisis on Jordan's sources of foreign exchange income will increase its external debt-servicing burdens. It is expected that the external debt-servicing payments will amount to $1.3 billion per year for several years to come, and this figure is likely to exceed $1.5 billion per year if Jordan obtains further soft loans.

Estimated foreign exchange losses resulting from the Gulf crisis in 1990

			Million US dollars
(a)	Foreign trade sector		229
(b)	Services sector		674
	Transport	138	
	Remittances from expatriates	213	
	Tourism	274	
	Other services	49	
(c)	General budget: Aid		393
	Aid from Kuwait	310	
	Other aid	75	
	Loans from Arab institutions in Kuwait	35	
	Refugee relief costs	48	

		Million US dollars
(d)	Debts due from Iraq	110
	Total losses (excl. petroleum and debts due from Iraq)	1 296
	Total losses (incl. petroleum and debts due from Iraq)	
	1. Assuming a petroleum price of $35 per barrel	1 521
	2. Assuming a petroleum price of $40 per barrel	1 544

Unemployment

34. The State is deeply concerned with the problem of unemployment, which has formed the subject of lengthy discussions at meetings of the National Assembly. The Government has endeavoured to provide the maximum possible number of employment opportunities for job-seekers in the government sector and has established a ministerial committee to deal with the phenomenon of unemployment. The Government has stressed the importance of rehabilitation and vocational training programmes and has set up a National Assistance Fund. The Ministry of Labour has expanded and streamlined its operations and was able to provide 6,300 employment opportunities in 1990, in addition to the 2,346 male and female employees who were appointed by the Civil Service Commission. However, the large number of graduates, particularly from academic educational institutions, aggravated the phenomenon of unemployment, and the situation in the Arab region, and especially the Gulf crisis, led to a worsening of this problem due to the repatriation of large numbers of expatriates who had been working in the Gulf States. The return of those expatriates is likely to increase the number of unemployed persons in Jordan by about 60,000, and this figure is constantly rising as more persons return.

35. Until 1990, the number of employment applications filed with the Civil Service Commission by holders of intermediate college diplomas amounted to a total of 30,299 (of which 23,933 were applications by females who constituted 79 per cent of the total number of job-seekers holding intermediate college diplomas). Until 1990, the number of employment applications filed with the Commission by holders of general certificates of secondary education amounted to about 6,387 (of which 3,345 were applications by females). The number of applications filed by holders of university degrees amounted to 10,869 (of which 5,000 were applications by females).

36. This gives an indication of the large number of graduates constantly seeking employment in the domestic and external labour market. The number of employment applications received by the Civil Service Commission in 1990 amounted to 47,555, distributed by educational qualification and sex in the manner shown in the following table:

Educational qualification	Males	Females	Total
University graduates	5 869	5 000	10 869
Intermediate college graduates	6 366	23 933	30 299
Secondary school graduates	3 042	3 345	6 387
Total	15 277	32 278	47 555

37. This table shows that applications by females constituted 68 per cent of the total applications in 1990 and that the majority (74 per cent) of these females were holders of intermediate college diplomas. It also shows that applications by holders of intermediate college diplomas constituted 64 per cent of the total applications, followed by university graduates (23 per cent) and holders of general certificates of secondary education (13 per cent).

Education

38. The Ministry of Education supervises education in Jordan from the kindergarten stage to the stage of academic and vocational secondary education. It is noteworthy that there was no increase in the number of schools in the academic year 1989/90, although the number of students was 2.6 per cent higher than in the academic year 1988/89. The Ministry of Higher Education supervises education at Jordan's universities and intermediate colleges. Table 3 below shows the breakdown of students by sex, educational level and supervisory authority in the academic year 1989/90. From this it can be seen that the number of students in that year amounted to 1,016,777, of whom 529,086 were males, distributed among the various educational levels (kindergarten, basic, academic secondary and vocational secondary) and supervisory authorities (Ministry of Education, other governmental authority, UNRWA and private education). In the same year, Jordan had 3,634 boys', girls' and coeducational schools and the number of teachers amounted to 45,331 (including 27,559 females) of whom 35,240 were employed in schools run by the Ministry of Education, 622 in other government schools, 3,634 in UNRWA schools and 5,668 in private schools.

39. With regard to higher and intermediate education, Jordan currently has 60 intermediate colleges, more than half of which are private. These colleges accept students who hold a general certificate of academic or vocational secondary education and the vast majority of their syllabuses are of two years' duration. Technical education at the intermediate colleges developed rapidly in the 1980s, as can be seen from the increased student intake (about 20,000 per year) into these educational institutions, which have been established throughout the country. There has also been a notable increase in the female enrolment rate (57 per cent, as compared with 43 per cent in the case of males).

40. Most students (64 per cent) enrol at private intermediate colleges, where the highest proportion of students follow an academic syllabus. The highest

rate of enrolment is in engineering (48 per cent) followed by ancillary medicine (26 per cent), fine and applied arts (13 per cent) and administrative sciences (8 per cent).

41. At the present time, it is difficult to forecast the future prospects of technical education at the intermediate colleges with any degree of accuracy due to the far-reaching changes that have recently been made in higher education. One of the principal changes permits the establishment of private universities: one began operating in the academic year 1990/91 and four others are expected to open in 1991/92. Another change lowered the minimum acceptance requirement at private universities to 60 per cent, as compared with 65 per cent at the government universities. This will increase the proportion of students enrolled for university education, many of whom would previously have been accepted only for technical education at the intermediate colleges.

42. The number of first-year students enrolled at higher educational institutions in the academic year 1989/90 was as follows:

	Total	Females
Jordanian universities	9 557	4 422
Amman University College for Applied Engineering	245	27
Jordanian intermediate colleges	20 681	11 118
Total	30 593	15 567

43. A comparison with the figures for the academic year 1988/89 shows the following:

(a) The total number of first-year students enrolled at higher educational institutions in Jordan in 1989/90 was 9.6 per cent higher than in the previous year and females accounted for 5.6 per cent of this overall increase. This increase is attributable to the greater proportional enrolment at higher educational institutions in Jordan in 1989/90;

(b) The number of students enrolled at Jordanian universities was 0.21 per cent higher than in 1988/89 (5.4 per cent higher in the case of females);

(c) The intake of first-year students into Jordanian intermediate colleges rose by 12.9 per cent and the total number of students enrolled for higher education in Jordan in 1989/90 amounted to 69,634, of whom 35,697 (51.3 per cent) were females. They were distributed among the higher educational institutions as follows:

	Total	Females	Percentage of females
Jordanian universities	31 757	14 348	45
Amman University College for Applied Engineering	245	27	11
Jordanian intermediate colleges	37 632	21 322	57
Total	69 634	35 697	51.3

II. GENERAL POLITICAL STRUCTURE

44. Jordan is an Arab-Islamic country with a long and glorious history of civilization. The sedentary population of its towns and villages engaged in agriculture and trade and played an active role in the intellectual, and particularly the religious, movements that flourished in ancient Syria. Since 624 AD, the country has been characterized by its Arab-Islamic culture, from which Jordanian society derives its values and ideals and which, being receptive to modern ideas, forms the basis of the national culture. Arabic is its national language and the means through which it expresses its cultural identity. In 1921, following the collapse of the Ottoman empire, Jordan became a State in the modern sense of the term and its first Government was formed in April of the same year. A Legislative Council was elected by the people and since the establishment of the State, Jordan has been a democratic country, in keeping with Hashemite tradition, notwithstanding a few periods during which parliamentary activity was interrupted for reasons or in circumstances beyond the nation's control due to the situation in the Middle East, particularly the question of Palestine and the occupation of some Arab territories. Political parties have existed in Jordan since the very beginning. Of the Arab nationalist parties that flourished in its territory, the first was the Independence Party, many members of which participated in the first Government in 1921. The People's Party was founded in March 1927, the Executive Committee of the National Congress Party in 1929, the Moderate Liberal Party in 1930, the Jordanian Solidarity Party in 1933 and the Jordan Arab Party in 1946. The latter's principal demands included the drafting of a democratic constitution, the holding of free parliamentary elections, the enjoyment of public freedoms and the formation of a democratic government.

45. The years 1953-1957 were a period of extensive development characterized by legislative amendments to the Jordanian Constitution which included, in particular, the lifting of restrictions on political party activity, suspension of the provisions of the Defence Act except in security-related matters, and the granting of freedom to form cultural associations, all of which contributed to the modernization of the Jordanian Constitution.

46. However, this period was preceded by events that changed the course of history. In 1948, the Palestine catastrophe led to the displacement of thousands of Palestinians into Jordan. The subsequent incorporation of the West Bank, the remaining part of Palestine, into Jordan also had an effect on Jordanian political life.

47. Since his accession to the Jordanian throne, His Majesty King Hussein has consistently sought to safeguard the Constitution and promote the concept of democracy. However, parliamentary life in Jordan reached a critical turning-point due to the circumstances of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967 and the Arab and international situation. In particular, the decision of the Arab Summit Conference at Rabat on 16 October 1974 to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian Arab people and to approve the establishment of a Palestinian government in the West Bank following the termination of the Israeli occupation forced the Jordanian Government to suspend parliamentary life, since the House of Representatives was no longer able to function. The Government also had to devise a new formula to fill the constitutional vacuum and provide an opportunity for popular participation in the assumption of decision-making responsibility. This was achieved in April 1978 through the establishment of the National Consultative Council, which proved to be an instrument capable of dealing with the exceptional situation with which the Kingdom was faced.

48. This situation was overcome by virtue of Jordan's diligent endeavours to consolidate the basic concepts of government since the early days of its statehood. In keeping with the basic principles of its national policy, a Royal Decree was promulgated in which an extraordinary session of the ninth National Assembly was convened on 9 January 1984. This was the historic background to the commencement of a new stage of democratization in Jordan in which directives were issued for the holding of general parliamentary elections. These elections, which represented the first step towards the consolidation, extension and protection of the process of democratization, were held in a manner that was fully consistent with the Constitution and the Electoral Act No. 22 of 1986. The elections were fought by political parties representing four principal trends or movements: the Islamic movement; the Conservative movement; the Leftist movement; and the National movement. Women as well as men were permitted to stand as candidates, without any discrimination, and women played an effective role in the election campaigns among ethnic and religious minorities. The country was divided into electoral districts in order to ensure that all sections of society were represented and full freedom was allowed for electioneering, as attested by the candidates themselves. Jordan's citizens, as well as international organizations and the international media, acknowledged that the people had chosen its representatives in a completely free and fair manner.

49. In furtherance of the concepts of democracy and political pluralism, the King ordered the formation of a Royal Commission to draft a National Charter defining the basic principles and rules of democratic political activity. The Commission, which comprised representatives of all sections of the population, drafted a National Charter which was adopted by a General People's Congress representing all sectors. The various chapters of the Charter made provision for the exercise of all civil, political, social and cultural rights. 1/

1/ The text of the National Charter was attached in Arabic and is available for consultation in the files of the Centre for Human Rights.

50. The Charter specifies its purposes and aims, after defining the identity of the Jordanian people, as confirmed in the Constitution which incorporates a number of fixed rules and principles governing the system of government in the Kingdom, which the Jordanian people has respected since the establishment of the State. The Covenant regards those principles and rules as widely accepted and undisputed, since they derive from the deep convictions, sentiments and interests of the people. Those principles stipulate that the system of government in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is parliamentary with a hereditary monarchy; that all citizens have an obligation to respect the letter and spirit of the law and the Constitution in order to safeguard the unity of the people, its leadership and its belief in Jordanian national identity as part of the Arab Nation, that Islam is the religion of the State and the cultural heritage of the Jordanian people, that all male and female Jordanians are equal before the law, and that all State institutions and members of Jordanian society and its various organizations have an obligation to consolidate the rule of law and further the process of democratization based on political pluralism.

51. The National Charter defines the concept of a constitutional State and political pluralism. It regards a constitutional State as a democratic State which is committed to the principle of the rule of law, derives its legitimacy, authority and effectiveness from the free will of the people and ensures that all its authorities respect the legal, judicial and administrative safeguards needed to protect the human rights, dignity and basic freedoms that were recognized by Islam and confirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In a clear reference to the importance of the practical application of these principles and rules, the Charter stipulates that the Jordanian State is a constitutional and democratic State in the modern sense of the term; the State belongs to all its citizens, regardless of any differences in their views and opinions, and derives its strength from its declared intention to put into practice the principles of equality, justice and equal opportunity and to provide ample scope for the Jordanian people to participate in decision-making concerning their daily life and affairs. In order to consolidate the democratic structure of the State and Jordanian society, the Charter indicates that efforts must be made to achieve the following objectives:

(a) The establishment, under the terms of a special legislative act, of an independent administrative tribunal which will inspect and control administrative departments, monitor the conduct of their personnel and submit reports to the National Assembly and the Council of Ministers, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and the laws and regulations in force, without prejudice to the independence and jurisdiction of the courts of law;

(b) The establishment, under the terms of a special legislative act, of an independent body to modernize and update legislation;

(c) The establishment of a Constitutional Court with the following terms of reference:

(i) Interpretation of the provisions of the Constitution;

(ii) Settlement of constitutional problems referred to it by the courts in connection with cases brought before them;

(iii) Settlement of disputes and adjudication in appeals concerning the constitutionality of laws and regulations;

(d) Standardization of legislation concerning states of emergency and grave emergency, as provided for in the Constitution;

(e) Restoration to the National Assembly of the legislative powers vested in the Council of Ministers, in accordance with articles 114 and 120 of the Constitution, concerning the regulation of government activities, procurement and the civil service;

(f) Introduction of the requisite constitutional amendments, in order to meet the new requirements, and abolition of the constitutional provisions that have lost their raison d'être.

52. In general, the Charter regulates political life in such a way as to ensure that Jordanians enjoy the right to form and join political organizations and parties provided that they adopt proper methods to achieve legitimate aims and that their statutes are consistent with the provisions of the Constitution. The Charter also emphasizes that the judiciary alone is competent to adjudicate in any dispute concerning the application of the Political Parties Act. It also stipulates that every party must undertake to assume or share ministerial responsibility on a footing of equality and equal opportunity for all citizens. Chapter IV of the Charter further emphasizes that development must be based on respect for private property and the promotion of individual initiative. The right to form trade-union organizations in various economic sectors is also recognized.

53. The National Charter stresses the importance of respect for the dignity of the human person, as well as the mother's role in the upbringing of the child and the child's right to the highest possible standard of care and protection from its parents and the State. Emphasis is also placed on the need to broaden the concept of social solidarity by increasing the scope of social security.

54. With regard to culture, education, science and information, the Charter stresses the need for an integrated education system to develop independent creative thought and ensure the academic freedom of universities and educational institutions. The Charter stipulates that Jordan's international relations in all fields must be based on equality, mutual respect and joint interests.

Table 1

ESTIMATED POPULATION BY GOVERNORATE AND SEX AT THE END OF 1990

Governorate	Male	Female	Total
Amman	741 800	702 600	1 444 400
Zarqa	273 100	257 800	530 900
Irbid	414 200	400 400	814 600
Mafraq	65 600	61 400	127 200
Balqa	121 600	113 700	235 300
Karak	72 500	67 500	140 000
Tafiela	24 400	23 000	47 400
Ma'an	63 800	49 400	113 200
Total	1 777 000	1 676 000	3 453 000

Table 2

ESTIMATED POPULATION BY SEX AND AGE GROUP IN 1990

Age group	Female	Male	Total
0-4	253 100	259 500	512 600
5-9	239 700	257 700	497 400
10-14	236 300	261 300	497 600
15-19	216 200	234 700	450 900
20-24	177 700	197 300	375 000
25-29	125 700	138 700	264 400
30-34	88 800	81 800	170 600
35-39	63 700	62 300	126 000
40-44	60 300	57 000	117 300
45-49	53 600	57 000	110 600
50-54	50 300	53 300	103 600
55-59	35 200	37 300	72 500
60-64	26 800	30 400	57 200
65-69	15 100	18 100	33 200
70-74	13 400	12 400	25 800
75-79	8 400	7 200	15 600
80+	11 700	11 000	22 700
Total	1 676 000	1 777 000	3 453 000

Table 3

STUDENTS BY SEX, CYCLE AND SUPERVISORY AUTHORITY IN 1989/90

	Sex	Vocational secondary	Academic secondary	Basic	Kindergarten	Students
Ministry of education and culture	Male	10 327	29 638	343 252	-	383 217
	Female	9 065	33 768	328 671	-	371 504
	Total	19 392	63 406	671 923	-	754 721
Other governmental authorities	Male	6 228	548	5 768	390	12 934
	Female	157	124	1 479	388	2 148
	Total	6 385	672	7 247	778	15 082
UNRWA	Male	525	-	67 719	-	68 244
	Female	-	-	64 846	-	64 846
	Total	525	-	132 565	-	133 090
Private education	Male	168	3 211	38 493	22 819	64 691
	Female	55	1 835	28 677	18 626	49 193
	Total	223	5 046	67 170	41 445	113 884
Grand total	Male	17 248	33 397	455 232	23 209	529 086
	Female	9 277	35 727	423 673	19 014	487 691
	Total	26 525	69 124	878 905	42 223	1 016 777

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture.